

CCFAC Public Hearing and Community Input Sessions

November – December 2012

Q1. What is your understanding of the purpose and process of the CCFP in meeting the County's needs?

Needs, priorities, categories, outcomes

- Money to meet local needs
- Funding pool meeting needs
- Are needs accurately/properly defined?
- Most important issues to citizens of Fairfax County
- Assessing needs
- So clients can be strengthened w/ funds → housing assistance
- Can identify gaps; all applicants are not funded
- Prevention, self-sufficiency, housing, long term and ongoing care
- Needs are defined by organizations; present their needs
- Nonprofits reach out to immigrant populations to find out needs
- Health Dept. reaches out to homeless population
- Many contracts, but only CCFP is community-driven
- Community based organizations may apply for CCFP funds
- Two-year set priority areas via community input (hearings)
- Funds programs, not organizations
- CCFP is funding for human services with a focus on poverty
- Priority set by county to address areas noticed by community advisory group
- Creative projects – immigrants, undocumented workers, community organizing
- Need better understanding of priorities
- Help residents with basic needs
- Way to prioritize needs. Collaboration between nonprofit community and the county
- Standard of care
 - Do categories = needs?
- Priorities to categories
- Helps identify needs in community with input from the community
- Focusing on different communities to ID targeted needs in specific communities
- Really looking at unmet needs not met by Fairfax County
- Needs are identified by assessment, survey, intake
- Demand increasing for other populations
- Daunting, unmet need seniors/middle class; our part of county has larger number
- Divide funding up by needs
- Community voicing of needs and how to coordinate funds and set priorities
- Community driven; bottom up; almost entirely county funding with a little federal and CBG funding
- Federal money to distribute based on priorities to meet community needs
- Best way to meet county resident needs
- Articulate the county “priority areas”
- Gives opportunity for community feedback
- Nonprofits can adjust based on “priority areas” and vice versa
- Writing proposal based on what nonprofit does regardless of established priorities
- To meet gaps for needs not currently served by human services contracts

- Money available to nonprofits to serve under-served populations
- Funding for programs that are unique to serve needs that may not have been previously identified
- Setting priorities
- Fills gaps (i.e., housing resources, job training)
- Set of goals based on needs; not sure how goals determined
- For the County to identify its resources

Effect on nonprofits

- Opportunity for nonprofits
- Innovation vs. sustainability/extensibility
 - What does CCFP value the most?
 - Limit duration of funding?
- Incubator
- Increase inter-project collaboration/coordination: visibility of issues not individual projects
- Close gaps/increase opportunities for smaller organizations to receive funding
- A way for organizations that specialize in areas to expand and avoid duplication
- Build capacity for organizations to meet/deliver human services needs
- Improve and build capacity of new nonprofits
- Supports worthy non-profit organizations
- Expand services
- Funding can assist – not necessarily long-term
- If a professional grant writer was hired, grant would have been awarded/secured
- Seed money/sustainability
- Significant funding sources for programs that can't be found elsewhere
- Support nonprofits aligned with county human service mission
- Important ongoing funding source for many organizations
- Want to attract new grantees, innovative services
- Tension, perception difficult for a new organization to access; once organization is in, more
- Large vs. small funding amounts
- Impact of loss of funding
- Additional funding fills a need in community
- Nonprofits looking for additional funding
- Complement other funding
- Support/funding organizations to resolve major problems
- Nonprofits supplemented by county
- Important for CBOs to partner with each other
- Some way smaller organizations can partner with other CBOs and apply for funding
- Do the nonprofits come together?
- Funding has provided opportunities for smaller nonprofits to leverage growth
- Process benefits larger nonprofits who have development departments and don't have to sacrifice time from programming
- Organization leverages dollars through use of volunteers
- Leverage of dollars
- Building partnerships

- Public-private partnership
- Maximize efficient and effective distribution of government funds to community-based organizations; to help direct funds to social services
- All advocacy groups make public presentations (needs hearings)
- Ensures a minimum level of capacity to manage county funds
- Volunteers vs. professional staff
- Leveraging volunteer investments
- How do nonprofits work with customers directly; ex: CSP
- Consolidate resources. Need xxx to create resources (nonprofits). Income capacity +/- increase volunteerism

Role of BOS, CCFAC, Staff, Politics

- Competitive process – apolitical
- Board of Supervisors final approval
- Eyes and ears for the BOS – conduit to the community
- CCFP pools money, some county, some federal
- Multiple organizations within county to look at a need or population. Collaboration across county departments
- Something organizations can't do or fully leverage; more efficient
- General oversight
- Priorities developed by CCFAC based on what's learned from the community
- County staff NCS uses it as a snapshot to see what is happening
- Oversee distribution of funds
- Serves to evaluate the way the money will be used
- To determine who receives
- Accomplishment of task that county can't do or organizations can do better
- Remove from political process
- CCFAC and Review Panel
Policy Evaluation
Target Selection
Goals Independence
Categories Evaluation categories
- Extension of what County can do; county defines need and partners with NPs. CCFP is opposite – NPs see need for particular program; convinces others and funding pool pays
- CCFAC – set priorities
- Funding is predicated on budget
- BOS puts out categories for decision-making – final decision
- Heavy input from county staff
- CCFAC makes recommendations (pulls data together)
- Challenges: so many needs, such a big county; how do you prioritize?
- Remove decision making from BOS to allow outside group decision re funding
- CCFAC and SAC purposes not clear
- Unknown who are reviewers
- BOS allocates funding

Process

- Bureaucratic and repetitive
- Lots of reporting
- If reapplying, past performance not considered
- Complex process; lots of regulation to certify that you are eligible
- Proposals vetted and scored, and top proposals are funded for two years
- Supports community projects beyond what county provides
- Competitive grant process
- Lack of content for questions, discussion
- Concern with communication prior to submission
- Arduous process, extensive application
- Likely to receive ongoing funding for current or new programs
- To leverage government and nonprofit resources towards problems in the community
- Equally and fairly distribute money
- Ops to be innovative and resolve issues
- Communication – understanding that the process is open to everyone
- Sustainable funding
- Establishing priorities begins process; RFP released; matching RFP priorities w/ nonprofit priorities to respond
- Figuring out process, how to get information, how to input for participating in next opportunity – communication
- Process has been hidden from nonprofit community
- Not clear that past performance is a part of the evaluation

Miscellaneous

- Not enough money to meet needs
- FISH provides emergency funding to help cover needs such as utilities, rent, etc., for short term help. Rides to Dr., food baskets ...
- Helps eliminate duplication and eliminate program duplication
- Forward Futures Youth Services working with students, children and families undergoing instability
- Trinity Presbyterian – coat drive, parenting program, PRSK
- Senior Center – Pool impetus for creating the Advisory Council and to form a 501c3 in hopes of being eligible for CCFP funds.
- Concern about track record. Would want to assure reliability and quality of services
- \$10 million (County); \$2 million (CDBG); \$600,000 (CSBG)
- Haven't heard about it until this briefing
- Heard about it but don't know purpose
- Identify production of services, not a chain or production
- CCFP is not the only funding stream
- Way to distribute more money efficiently
- Leveraging county funds, stretch dollars

Q2. What are the areas of the CCFP process that you think are working?

Priorities

- Based on community needs; fair, apolitical
- Aggregation of needs
- Community up through CCFAC
- Balance of sustainable vs. new projects
- Identify community needs from the community – key function of CCFAC
- Don't recall having county's priorities
- Results Based Accountability – County has set some priorities. CCFAC and these principals not asked to be aligned
- Helps prioritize the need
- Planning around outcomes
- Program has outcomes and is measurable
- Community-based
- Fair
- Based on strategic priorities / community needs
- Emphasis on outcomes
- Service-oriented
- Emerging issues get funded
- Selection criteria based on "priority areas"
- Public involvement
- Keeps politics out of funding decisions
- Removed from politics
- Outcome-driven
- Knowing that funding is not guaranteed

Process

- Consumer friendly application and workshop process
- GMU assistance with reporting software, ACCA uses, offered it to others
- Technical assistance
- Articulates what will be done with information
- Two year cycle very helpful; predictable and reliable
- No guarantee from cycle to cycle but have had same programs for years
- Grant monitor has been a great resource – immediate outcome, long term outcome
- Evaluating grants
- Knowing there is a process, this is what we have to do, networking, sharing best practices, and learning from one another – Community Building
- Referral process – CSP, RI
- Two year cycle much better than one year (not enough manpower for grant writing/fundraising)
- Two year grant cycle
- Process is cumbersome, but makes nonprofits keep and track data
- Two-year cycle is good, but could be three years or longer
- Input from CCFP regarding proposals
- Selection advisory group – looks geographically to meet needs across the county
- 90 applications have been accepted out of approximately 140 submitted

- Organizations and reviewers like the two year cycle
- Process involves transparency and accountability
- Funds are being administered
- Two-year grant
- Competitive grant process
- Lack of content for questions, discussion
- Accessible and helpful grant officer
- Communication – opportunities, meeting notes, RFP, drafts, public comments, etc.
- Reporting mechanisms
- Board presentations by grantees
- Application to review process to awards made
- Looks at merit of application
- Many things have to work to achieve goals – funding pool helps this process
- Two-year cycle is good
- Standard application
- Staff has been helpful
- Online reporting is efficient
- Contract analyst is a good resource
- Data from NPOs

Effect on Nonprofits; Collaboration

- Emphasis on helping small NPs
- One recipient has received CCFP funding for eight years and stated that the system works well
- Should measure success of existing and weigh against new projects
 - Not sure if organizations doing effectively
- Can pick out xxx stories that have the quality of what is being done
- County receiving a 4-to-1 investment is excellent use of funds (FISH)
- Use as a screening tool for finding contracts with county
- Needs to be oversight
- Consider this as incubator for next step
- How can we partner with others?
- Collaborate – have nonprofits find ways to pool resources, talent to increase effectiveness
- The organization states the needs. Nothing is assessed on a scale according to FX County Human Services
- Okay if organizations outside Fairfax County receive funding if they are serving Fairfax residents (tracking/audits key); more regional coordination across boundaries
- Funding is for programs (for two years) not general organizations
- All nonprofits eligible, including very small ones
- Depends on what the nonprofit is asking for
- Nonprofits push forward innovations; county can facilitate
- Those who know process get money; multiple programs
- What's taken into consideration when nonprofits apply a second time?
- Nonprofits get money
- Increase communication among providers, but if process is competitive, would nonprofits be willing to share?

Miscellaneous

- County is different
- Full or partial funding
- What's put in to avoid duplication?
- Funds good programs
- Try to fund as many programs as possible
- Availability of funds

Q3. What areas of the process can be improved?

Priorities

- Connection to other county “plans” (e.g., 50+, housing, etc.)
- Use outcome statements
- Need to be responsive to needs of community
- CCFP recipients need to try to understand/communicate with client base
- Reality check on outcomes
- What can organization do?
 - o Help store what tools are being used to track information
 - o Hard to share
 - o Why are we collecting some information that doesn’t seem to be used? Some may be federal requirement
 - o Community engagement counts can’t collect detailed data
- Legitimate need to track outcomes
- Review our measurements
- Continue support in developing outcomes and educating about outcomes
- Qualitative outcome focus (success stories)
- Look at the outcomes of organizations; are these feasible (not just numbers) specific questions
- Outcomes need to be straight forward in nonprofits that don’t have paid staff
- For county organizations RBA outcomes align with CCFP outcomes
- County-wide needs assessment may need to be done to assess ever-changing needs (more in-depth)
- Priorities are soft (prevention, basic needs) not specific priority programs
- “Self-sufficiency” is too broad a category; also “crisis”
- One person’s idea of self-sufficiency or crisis, may be far different than another’s
- Can program change to meet evolving needs?
- Needs to be more outreach to volunteer-based organizations/churches
- Four regions so different that one definition not adequate
- Outcomes – different definitions of success
- Small nonprofits can’t afford grant writers
- No feedback provided after application
- More programs for training and education
- Decisions are not based on regional need
- Add “emerging needs” category
- Ensure room for new projects based on emerging needs
- Are “priority areas” reflecting population changes
- Demographics (capture on application)
- Possibly include requirement to address project sustainability within application if funding doesn’t continue
- Additional funding for staff salaries

- Trends (poverty, joblessness)
- Emerging issues get funded, but other priorities don't get funded; programs working against each other
- Priorities compete
- More qualitative data to set priorities and measure outcomes; "stories"
- Expand narrow programs to wider population
- Leveraging county funding across regions – a need is a need!
- May give funding to programs, but are supportive services in place to educate/train recipient
- Will the person who gets money for utilities this month be able to budget his money better next month to avoid requesting again

Process

- Revise/better define of funding categories and priorities
- Selection criteria
- On-line application could help
- Relevance/utility of data collection
- Time to collect data
- Two-year cycle with no guarantee
- Amount of reporting
- Have to make case every two years
- Organizations reporting in WebR
 - One size fits all that doesn't fit all
 - Herndon day labor site
 - High volume projects
- Intrusiveness of data collection elements (e.g., race, ethnicity, income level, size of household) – these are often federal reporting requirements
- Very fast repercussions; little warning of defunding
- Allowing administrative and staffing expenses to be covered by CCFP money
- Improve application – streamline, put it all online
- Could some items be carried over from prior application?
- Need some simple point where simplification can be done
- It is a hybrid between grant and contract
- Application seems to complex
- Calendar?
- Application cumbersome and time consuming and requires excellent grant writing skill. Needs to show accountability and outcomes
- May be offering a class or workshop to assist with grant writing. Perhaps use North County Team.
- WebR doesn't capture big picture outcomes
- RFP can be re-formatted, redundant, flow of questions
- Review and feedback after the proposal needs improving

- Clearer questions
- Require potential applicants to attend pre-proposal conference
- Application is 100 pages long; very time consuming
- Streamline application process
- Two year cycle is too short; difficult to get a full grasp on success of program
- One year trial and error
- Suggest at least three years
- Information collection – it's a lot of information for an organization to collect if they don't have time resources (i.e., databases)
- Organizations don't apply, programs apply, therefore competing against self
- Percentage of four needs categories, sometimes forcing program into category
- Categories confusing
- Subcategories within major categories
- Value of organizations has not been easy to capture in application packet
- On-line application
- Increase number of years in cycle
- Get rid of one-size-fits-all application
- Change time line of due date; after Thanksgiving is difficult
- Pre-qualify for some organizations before application process
- Shouldn't ask for resumes of low level staff
- Build in process for Q&A after application process has ended
- Invite all applicants in for face to face and ask the same questions
- Application process
- Deadline during busy season/problematic timing
- Initial meeting to due date – six weeks
- Based on how well proposal is written?
- Too much paperwork; simplify
- Short narrative instead of forms
- Proposal writing workshops
- Online application with basic information included
- WebR not easy to use
- Not specific to program
- One size fits all
- Can't modify; doesn't understand how to modify
- Some users technology resistant
- Timing and complexity of grant process
- Can't email; requires paper
- Requests irrelevant information
- Simplify, focus, communicate
- Consider staggering application process
- Streamline the process to avoid excessive inefficiencies

- Grant writing process very complex. Could there be a short form for “second cycle” – those who have received grants and are re-applying?
- Approved May – FY July if you don’t receive funding, organization only has two months to try to identify different funding sources
- RFP should be issued sooner in the year (not over Thanksgiving)

Collaboration; small vs. large nonprofits

- More emphasis/incentives for collaboration between non-profit
- Access for NPOs
- Capacity building
- Help for new/smaller nonprofits to understand, access CCFP – communication
- Removal of barriers to funding for small nonprofits, i.e., audits
- Large NPs and small NP – apples and oranges
- If currently funded programs are all approved, then new programs will never be funded; smaller NPs are affected
- Figuring out collaborative process with groups.
- Make process more collaborative instead of competitive. Look for ways for groups to combine forces
- Encourage collaboration
- Cycle in new organizations and nonprofits
- Challenge: some organizations don’t have full time paid staff to cover multiple needs
- Clear, precise definition of “collaboration”
- Leverage of other resources may not be possible for smaller organizations
- Vehicle for sharing is needed
- Applying for funding is complicated for small nonprofits with little resources
- Strict requirements for small nonprofits
- Need for cooperative atmosphere

Role of CCFAC, SAC, etc.

- Access to information from county staff perspective
- Grant administrators need to be on same page and consistent
- Equal representation on SAC
- Should CCFP decide category of program?
- More need in R1
- No community of regions – all separate, siloed
- Great deal of competition between nonprofits in R1 because need is so great
- Scoring is a clean slate each cycle
- Applicants are not informed as to how SAC is trained on application review
- Have some SAC members, maybe NPs or former NPs, nonvoting, to advise voting SAC members

- Reviewers don't understand the nonprofit community
- What requirements are needed for SAC to make their decision

Miscellaneous

- Programs, not organizations, are cut
- If a percent goes back, then?
- Grant Center
- Some grants on paper may look better than in actuality
- Middle class seniors
- Children with disabilities
- Seniors not necessarily disabled
- More coordination between funding pool and county contracts
- Duplicative
- Competitive environment
- Long term and short term options
- Competing

Q4. What do you think is the most effective way to distribute funds to nonprofit agencies in the future to address community needs?

Priorities

- Some federal grants set priorities in an area of service
 - Need to look at what are top priorities
- Maybe need to have sub-pots for different types of grants, rather than priority
- Maybe identify population group or function of grant (e.g., housing)
- Performance measures
- Conduct county needs assessment
- Can the county publish more info on needs of the residents?
- Measure needs by community
- Are past outcomes reviewed as part of proposal?
- Put emerging needs within CCFP for two years but not same group in next funding cycle
- Keep RBA; maintain focus on outcomes
- Align human services focus areas with CCFP outcomes
- What role does community play in shaping the need: How do they collaborate with the county agencies?
- Be explicit about what community has voiced in funding pool
- Categorize funding based on service needed or population served
- Allocate emergency services funds based on regional needs and county boundaries
- Link between RBA and application process
- Ensure that needs are covered by other nonprofits (in collaboration) when a program is not funded
- Points for the service area being underserved

Process, including more money

- Increase “match” requirement for NPOs who get ongoing funding
- Current way is working well
- Is it efficient to do it through the Purchasing Dept.?
- Could have extension of contracts
- Ranking system?
- Consider new groups on a preliminary one-year cycle
- If an organization has a separate contract with the County, should not be eligible for CCFP money
- In-kind, cash, volunteer leveraging
- In-person interviews
- Long term, consistent nonprofit recipients should have application process simplified
- Keep two year grant
- Half of funding at a time, rolling funding
- Give successful programs “extra credit” on their applications
- CBO sees need, submits proposal, bottom-up approach, as opposed to current top-down (county contracts)
- Divide funding based on outcomes you are looking for
- Renewals versus submitting as “new” each time

- CCFAC converting from procurement process to a grant award process
- \$100,000 = procurement; < \$99,000 = grant
- County conduct and pay for audit
- Simplified and focused; better communication about priorities and application, deadlines, and process
- More money! Increase number of organizations that could be receiving funds
- Revenue increase?
- Not enough funding
- Should there be more money in the CCFP?

Technical Assistance

- More training, seminars, workshops Additional training throughout the year, especially for new applicants/recipients
- Q&A on website
- Go to visit each nonprofit personally that applies to have a site visit to validate
- Pre-education piece
- Use our North County Team meetings

Collaboration

- Should not have penalty for not collaborating if providing a unique service
- Required collaboration
- Networking, promote collaboration among like programs/service providers

Role of CCFAC, SAC, etc.

- Publicize opportunities for applying
- More outreach by CCFAC
- Review of how county funds all non-profits
- More communication between cross county agencies
- Link messaging throughout
- SAC identification of collaborations between nonprofits doing same kind of work and/or in same regions

Large vs. small nonprofits

- Incubator for small or new applicant organizations
- Set aside 5% for new applicants, or for groups with other priorities
- New small organizations with new, innovative ideas also need funding but difficult to compete with big organizations or fit in established priorities
- Separate new programs from long term process
- What happens to smaller organizations who decided to compete in process when a lot of smaller organizations are falling under the umbrella of larger nonprofits?
- Different pools of money for large and small nonprofits

Required services

- Maybe the funding pool should be considered as a point of entry for funding, not a revolving long-term funding solution (long term might be part of general fund allocation)
- Decide what are essential services in the community and how do we fund between county and nonprofits; how do we make sure those things are continued to be funded
- Could “critical service” providers be eligible for long term grants?
- If the County Human Services is actually dependent on this service, does it make sense to have this in the pool?
- Why not pull “necessary services” into the regular budget and not have it be required to compete?